

Thomas Jefferson to Mary Jefferson Eppes, January 17, 1800, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO MARY JEFFERSON EPPES¹

¹ From S. N. Randolph's *Domestic Life of Jefferson*.

Philadelphia Jan. 17th, 1800.

My dear Maria, —I received at Monticello two letters from you, and meant to have answered them a little before my departure for this place; but business so crowded upon me at that moment that it was not in my power. I left home on the 21st, and arrived here on the 28th of December, after a pleasant journey of fine weather and good roads, and without having experienced any inconvenience. The Senate had not yet entered into business, and I may say they have not yet entered into it; for we have not occupation for half an hour a day. Indeed, it is so apparent that we have nothing to do but to raise money to fill the deficit of five millions of dollars, that it is proposed we shall rise about the middle of March; and as the proposition comes from the Eastern members, who have always been for sitting permanently, while the Southern are constant for early adjournment, I presume we shall rise then. In the meanwhile, they are about to renew the bill suspending intercourse with France, which is in fact a bill to prohibit the exportation of tobacco, and to reduce the tobacco States to passive obedience by poverty.

J. Randolph has entered into debate with great splendor and approbation. He used an unguarded word in his first speech, applying the word “ragmuffin” to the common soldiery. He took it back of his own accord, and very handsomely, the next day, when he had

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occasion to reply. Still, in the evening of the second day, he was jostled, and his coat pulled at the theatre by two officers of the Navy, who repeated the word “ragmuffin.” His friends present supported him spiritedly, so that nothing further followed. Conceiving, and, as I think, justly, that the House of Representatives (not having passed a law on the subject) could not punish the offenders, he wrote a letter to the President, who laid it before the House, where it is still depending. He has conducted himself with great propriety, and I have no doubt will come out with increase of reputation, being determined himself to oppose the interposition of the House when they have no law for it.

M. du Pont, his wife and family, are arrived at New York,

after a voyage of three months and five days. I suppose after he is a little recruited from his voyage we shall see him here. His son is with him, as is also his son-in-law Bureau Pusy, the companion and fellow sufferer of Lafayette. I have a letter from Lafayette of April; he then expected to sail for America in July, but I suspect he awaits the effect of the mission of our ministers. I presume that Madame de Lafayette is to come with them, and that they mean to settle in America.

The prospect of returning early to Monticello is to me a most charming one. I hope the fishery will not prevent your joining us early in the spring. However, on this subject we can speak together, as I will endeavor, if possible, to take Mont Blanco and Eppington in my way.

A letter from Dr. Carr, of December 27, informed me he has just left you well. I become daily more anxious to hear from you, and to know that you continue well, your present state being one which is most interesting to a parent; and its issue, I hope, will be such as to give you experience what a parent's anxiety may be. I employ my leisure moments in repassing often in my mind our happy domestic society when together at Monticello, and looking forward to the renewal of it. No other society gives me now any satisfaction, as no other is founded in sincere affection. Take care of yourself, my dear Maria, for my sake,

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and cherish your affections for me, as my happiness rests solely on yours, and on that of your sister's and your dear connections. Present me affectionately to Mr. Eppes, to whom I enclosed some pamphlets some time ago without any letter; as I shall write no letters the ensuing year for political reasons which I explained to him. Present my affections also to Mrs. and Mr. Eppes, Senior, and all the family, for whom I feel every interest that I do for my own. Be assured yourself, my dear, of my most tender and constant love. Adieu. Yours affectionately and forever.